

**Washington, D.C. (February 14, 2013)** – The House Energy and Commerce Committee heard testimony today from Mr. Jeff Smatsky, the factory manager of Zephyrhills Water in Pasco County, before the Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing and Trade. Mr. Smatsky was invited to testify by Congressman Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) whose Congressional district includes Pasco County. This hearing is the first in a series of planned Congressional hearings, examining the domestic manufacturing industry and ways Congress can help in its recovery.

“The American worker is second to none, and we must find ways to support our country’s manufacturing base,” said Bilirakis. “Locally, Zephyrhills Water employs 258 people and manufactures Zephyrhills and Nestlé Pure Life water products, ranging from eight-ounce to five-gallon ‘water cooler’ containers, which are distributed to homes and offices across Florida. Their testimony shed light on the state of our economy and how we can spur economic growth in this vital sector.”

In Florida, manufacturing employs more than 311,000 Floridians, of which nearly 10,000 come from District 12, which is represented by Bilirakis.

“Today, 70 percent of what Americans drink either comes in a can, in a bottle or another container,” said Smatsky. “At Zephyrhills, we are proud to not only produce great quality bottled water, but also great quality jobs.”

In his testimony, Smatsky described the positive economic impact manufacturers, such as Zephyrhills Water, have made in Florida. He also detailed how the bottled water industry has, on its own, taken great strides to sustain water resources and reduce its environmental impact. Finally, his testimony also described the web of regulatory schemes industries must navigate and the economic growth that is inhibited when those regulations overlap, conflict or impose excessive administrative steps on businesses.

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